

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 05102 221418Z

43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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R 221257Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0003

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5102

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LY

SUBJ: LIBYAN COUP ATTEMPT: GOT APPARENTLY SHELTERING PLOTTER

1. TUNISIAN MEDIA WERE SILENT UNTIL AUGUST 21 REGARDING REPORTS THAT LIBYAN RCC MEMBER MAJOR MUHAYSHI HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN TUNISIA AFTER ATTEMPTING ASSASSINATION OF QUADHAFI. STORIES FROM CAIRO'S AL-AHRAM AND FRENCH LE MONDE CIRCULATED HERE, HOWEVER, AND FOREIGN PRESS REPS HAVE BEEN DIGGING HARD FOR GOT STATEMENT ON THE CASE. AUGUST 21, TUNIS NEWSPAPERS DISCUSSED THE REPORTS BUT ONLY QUOTED FOREIGN PRESS ACCOUNTS.

2. LE TEMPS, INDEPENDENT DAILY, FRONT PAGES AUGUST 22 NEWS THAT A WELL INFORMED TUNISIAN SOURCE NEITHER CONFIRMED NOR DENIED MUHAYSHI'S PRESENCE IN TUNISIA. AS SABAH, ARABIC DAILY UNDER SAME MANAGEMENT, REPORTS THAT ITS EDITOR RECEIVED NO ANSWER WHEN HE INQUIRED WHAT TUNISIA'S RESPONSE WOULD BE IF TRIPOLI DEMANDED MUHAYSHI'S RETURN. THE PAPER THEN GIVES ITS OWN OPINION THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT IT BELIVES TO BE GOT'S UNVARIED PAST
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 05102 221418Z

PRACTICE, GOT WOULD NOT EXTRADITE MUHAYSHI. WE UNDER-

STAND AL AHAM HAS REPORTED LIBYA ASKED GOT TO SEND HIM BACK, AND THAT GOT REFUSED.

3. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIAL FLATLY DENIED TO SWISS JOURNALIST THREE DAYS AGO THAT MUHAYSHI WAS HERE.

4. MOHAMED SAYAH, MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTRY AND DESTOUR PARTY DIRECTOR, PRESSED BY LONDON TIMES STRINGER AUGUST 21, VIRTUALLY ADMITTED MUHAYSHI'S PRESENCE HERE, BUT SAID GOT WOULD FOLLOW ITS "CUSTOMARY STYLE" AND SAY NOTHING ON THE SUBJECT.

5. MUHAYSHI'S PRESENCE, AND RUMORED PRESENCE WITH HIM OF SEVERAL OTHER LIBYANS IMPLICATED IN THE ATTEMPTED COUP, HAVE BEEN THE TALK OF TUNISIA FOR A WEEK NOW. WHILE THE CONSENSUS AMONG NON-OFFICIALS AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IS THAT GOT SHOULD BE VERY NERVOUS ABOUT POSSIBLE LIBYAN REPRISALS AGAINST TUNISIA FOR SHELTERING MUHAYSHI, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOT SEES ADVANTAGES. TUNISIANS HAVE THUS FAR BEEN UNABLE TO INDUCE LIBYANS TO BREAK UP THE NUCLEUS OF ANTI-TUNISIAN SUBVERSION EXISTING IN LIBYA AND THEY MAY SEE THEIR ASSISTANCE TO MUHAYSHI AS A USEFUL BARGAINING CARD. THERE HAS BEEN, INCIDENTALLY, ALMOST NO SPECULATION HERE THAT GOT MAY HAVE HAD ACTIVE ROLE IN THE ABORTIVE COUP. SEELYE

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